

*February 6, 2013*

*Stockton, Calif.* – Congressman Jerry McNerney (D-Stockton) wrote to Secretary Eric Shinseki of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), calling on the VA to guarantee and expedite funding for the construction of a new veterans' medical facility and nursing home in San Joaquin County. Congressman McNerney was instrumental in securing the authorization of the facility and its location, bringing 900 jobs to the region.

“For far too long, the veterans who have fought to defend our country have had to travel hundreds of miles to receive the services and benefits they have earned and deserve. The VA must prioritize the construction of this new facility in order to honor our commitment to the men and women who have sacrificed so much to protect our way of life,” said Congressman McNerney.

The letter calls on Secretary Shinseki to include funding for the San Joaquin facility in the VA's Fiscal Year 2014 budget.

“At a time when good, family-wage jobs are so desperately needed in our region, expediting the construction of this facility will make a big difference for our local economy. It will serve our local veterans who deserve the best treatment possible and create 900 jobs. Both are priorities for our community that I take very personally,” said Congressman McNerney.

Additionally, Congressman McNerney urged Secretary Shinseki to explore options to keep the Livermore VA Medical Center as a provider of veterans' services. Once the San Joaquin County and Alameda County facilities are operational, the VA will reevaluate what the best option is for the Livermore facility.

“I have fought to keep the Livermore Medical Center in the hands of veterans for the past six years. At the end of the day, we have a duty to provide our service men and women with the best possible access to their benefits, and I strongly urge the VA to explore options to maintain the Livermore facility in a way that benefits our veterans,” said Congressman McNerney.

The text of the letter is below and attached [here](#) .

February 6, 2013

The Honorable Eric Shinseki  
Secretary  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary Shinseki:

I appreciate your continued dedication to the men and women who have served our country, and I am pleased that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has agreed to locate a new outpatient clinic and community living center in San Joaquin County. As you know, our veterans sacrificed greatly to defend our country and they deserve the best care and benefits upon transitioning to civilian life. That is why I urge the VA to guarantee and accelerate funding for construction of the new VA facility in French Camp.

According to the VA, the design and development phase of this project will be completed in early spring 2013. However, each day this project is delayed means thousands of veterans must drive hundreds of miles to Palo Alto, CA for many medical services. Furthermore, the Central Valley in Northern California is disproportionately affected by high unemployment rates. The French Camp facility is estimated to create 900 jobs at a critical time for our region's economy and veterans. For these reasons, expediting construction is essential and your leadership through the budget process will greatly benefit veterans in California.

In addition, the Livermore VA Medical Center will be reevaluated for best use once the new facilities in San Joaquin County and Alameda County are completed. Once again, I request that you keep the Livermore facility in the hands of veterans. The VA may want to explore the feasibility of transitioning this facility into a community based outpatient clinic so that local veterans can continue to receive critical medical services, while not burdening the VA budget.

I know that the VA is working to utilize its resources efficiently, so that we are able to provide veterans with the benefits they earned, and that you remain committed to maintaining the highest level of care for veterans. As you continue your great work as Secretary of the VA, I ask that you include funding for the French Camp facility in your FY2014 budget. Thank you for

your time and commitment on behalf of all our nation's veterans.

Sincerely,

Jerry McNerney  
Member of Congress

cc: OMB Acting Director Jeffrey Zients